



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
[www.uspto.gov](http://www.uspto.gov)

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/730,116	12/05/2000	Robert Manuel Carmichael	10464.6803	8544
7590	04/01/2004			
			EXAMINER	
			VASUDEVA, AJAY	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3617	

DATE MAILED: 04/01/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>
	09/730,116	CARMICHAEL, ROBERT MANUEL
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>
	Ajay Vasudeva	3617

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
  - If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
  - If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
  - Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 August 2003.
- 2a) This action is FINAL.      2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All    b) Some \* c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)                     |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                    | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____  |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____. | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
|   | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____.                                   |

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Priority*

1. Applicant's petition, filed November 15, 2002, requesting (i) permission to claim priority to application number 09/628,836 ('836), and (ii) to be listed as a co-inventor in the '836 application has been dismissed.

See Office decision in paper no. 18, mailed January 07, 2004 for details.

Since a claim for an earlier priority date to the '836 application is held invalid, the applicant is required to withdraw the statement made in the paper filed 6/21/2001, that claims a priority to the '836 application.

### *Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102*

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(f) he did not himself invent the subject matter sought to be patented.

3. Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(f) because the applicant did not invent the claimed subject matter.

Claims 1-21 are rejected in view of the invention having been made by a different inventive entity, as has been disclosed in the application no. 09/628,836 ('836).

As noted in the previous Office Actions, the '836 application:

- (i) discloses the exact invention as being claimed in the present application,
- (ii) has a different inventive entity, and additionally,
- (iii) has no common inventors with the present application.

Art Unit: 3617

Specifically, the '836 application discloses a ballast receiving pocket [38], a ballast weight [54] stored in a pouch [40], and retaining system comprising first and second straps, exactly as being claimed in the instant invention. The full disclosure of the '836 application can be seen as incorporated in the continuing US application no. 09/916,414, now US Patent No. 6,527,480 cited in this Office Action.

#### ***Response to Arguments***

4. Regarding rejection of claims 1-21 under 35 U.S.C. 102(f), applicant states that all the limitations in the claim are not present in the '836 application, and that the 102(f) rejection should not be made regardless of the decision on Applicant's Petition.

The Examiner notes that the applicant has failed to specifically pointed out those limitations in the claims that are not present in the '836 application. Further, the Examiner believes that the '836 application discloses the exact invention as being claimed in the present application, the contents of which can be verified in the cited US Patent No. 6,527,480.

#### ***Conclusion***

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure:

Cressi, Angelini et al., Garofalo, and Bortner show ballast release systems for diving jackets.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ajay Vasudeva whose telephone number is (703) 306-5992. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 1:00 pm--5:30 pm.

Art Unit: 3617

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, S. Joe Morano can be reached on (703) 308-0230. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Ajay Vasudeva  
Examiner  
Art Unit 3617

  
AV

  
S. JOSEPH MORANO  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600